

The horses were coming in from the paddock now, and there was a hush of expectancy. A messenger boy touched Vladimir on the shoulder and he started. "M. Valinoff?" A note from her, from Alexandria! Her smoothly running, black writing—this time in pencil—how well he knew it. He tore open the envelope and the written message swam before his eyes: "Beloved, don't be cross! I am looking right at you. I am on the west side of the grandstand, a little behind Paul (only he doesn't know it, you may be sure)! Why were you so disagreeable about my coming to the races, I wonder. Last night I said I would try to get a seat, somehow, and Paul forbade me to go. 'Forbade,' forsooth! Imagine the audacity! But here I am. One of the Lentsfoff girls sprained her ankle and her sisters came for me and would have it that I come. Oh! Vladimir, I wish I could bet. You will go home with us, won't you? and don't be angry—" There was more, but he read no further. In his soul he groaned. Aloud, to the messenger, he said: "There is no answer."

"She is here!" Of a sudden he saw her. She waved her hand and in all that sea of faces there was no other for his dazed vision.

The horses were ready for the drop of the flag. In the hush of expectancy Vladimir knew that the instant had come. The balloons in Paul's hand must be quivering, the grand duke was leaning forward, smiling. Vladimir rose

to his feet. Thoughts fly fast when seconds tremble with death, but there was no time for warning, no time to get to her to take her away from what might be imminent death. In that brief instant Vladimir knew that he was, in his heart, a traitor to his cause. To do evil that good might come would never bring justice to humanity. It was no sane creed to which he had pinned his faith. "I would give it up—I will give it up," he said to his soul; "if I am to live, I will mete out tenderness to the oppressed, rather than violence to the powerful." Suddenly he knew what he must do—he must create an excitement to make her fly to him. He could see her so plainly, and she was looking at him through racing glasses. To fire in the air would leave her frightened and stunned—to aim among the crowd might injure others, but to—he thrust her note into his pocket—there was a glint of steel in his hand. He turned the weapon upon himself and fired.

The revolver shot came like a boom in the silence. Women shrieked in the uncertainty of what had happened, but one woman knew and with agonized, hurrying footsteps, dashed for the aisle. "Keep your seats!" shouted the cool-headed, and there was frightened obedience from the crowd, but she plunged on. Women who saw her face made way for her; men, feeling her plight, helped her where they could, but she did not feel their guiding hands.